

these careful steps back toward in-person operations: Dr. Brian Monahan and the entire Office of the Attending Physician, well done; everyone in the Offices of the Architect of the Capitol, the Sergeant at Arms, the Secretary of the Senate, and our colleagues on the Rules Committee and their staff. Of course, the teams who support our networks and telecommunications were working hard day and night during these weeks of remote work.

Even more broadly, I want to recognize and thank all—all—the essential Senate staff who are here with us today in person so the Senate can function. Whether they be staff members in our own offices and committee offices, all the nonpartisan professionals who serve the institution itself, and, particularly, our facilities employees, custodians, food service staff, and, of course, the men and women of the Capitol Police, we are grateful for your service, and, more importantly, your country is grateful for your service. You are literally helping our government function in the midst of this crisis.

The Senate is back in session because we have important work to do for the Nation. Critical posts throughout the Federal Government—from public health to national security and beyond—remain vacant. Qualified nominees who have been held up for too long already have become even more necessary in these uncertain times.

On the floor and in committee, the Senate will be acting on key nominations that relate directly to the safety of the American people, oversight of our coronavirus legislation, and more. We need to continue to maintain and safeguard our domestic nuclear resources. That is our first nominee, Mr. Feitel.

We need to keep protecting our Nation against foreign intelligence services. That is another nominee we will be moving soon, Mr. Evanina. Those around the world who wish harm on Americans are not going to give us a free pass until the pandemic is over, so the Senate needs to overcome obstruction and continue to act.

I don't think anybody could seriously argue that filling critical national security posts is not essential Senate business. But to any of my colleagues who may wish that we did not have to devote floor time and rollcall votes to these kinds of nominations, I would simply say: I agree with you. I agree with you.

Unfortunately, for more than 3 years now, my colleagues in Democratic leadership have used across-the-board obstruction to force floor time and even cloture votes for the kinds of sub-Cabinet level nominations that used to travel easily by voice vote. If any of my colleagues on either side wish that we could recover the Senate's tradition and spend less floor time on these sorts of nominations, I would invite them to share their view with the distinguished Democratic leadership and invite them

to change their tactics. But as long as floor time and rollcall votes remain the only way for the Senate to fill important posts, that is what we will do. We cannot let nuclear watchdogs or counterintelligence leaders stay on the sidelines.

The Senate is going to be as smart and safe as we possibly can, and we are going to show up for work like the essential workers we are. Our bosses are the American people, and they are counting on us to keep on serving.

It is good to see the Chair and all of our colleagues again. I am grateful that all 100 of us have come through the last several weeks safely and in good health. Let's work together, across the aisle, and get some more work done for the American people.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Robert J. Feitel, of Maryland, to be Inspector General, Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Mr. McCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, the Senate convenes a session this evening during a trying time for our Nation. As we speak, millions of our citizens are respecting stay-at-home orders and doing their part to stop the spread of this pernicious disease. Millions upon millions are now newly unemployed, dependent on the actions we take in Congress to stave off financial disaster. More than 1 million Americans have tested positive for COVID-19. More than 67,000 lives have been lost.

My home State of New York has been hit the hardest. The loss of so many precious lives, the suffering of so many

families unable to comfort or even say goodbye to a loved one have been extremely painful, enough to break your heart.

At the same time, while we are grieving, we are also inspired by the bravery of our doctors and nurses, healthcare workers, first responders, and other daily heroes—many of them immigrants—on the frontlines of this crisis. To them we owe an extraordinary debt of gratitude, an enormous thank-you that I hear out the windows of my apartment and many in New York at 7 p.m. when we applaud them as they change shifts every night—an act that brings isolated New Yorkers together.

More than that, this Congress, this Senate, must deliver the people of our country relief. We have come together on several occasions to pass historic legislation in this time of crisis. They passed 96 to 0, which shows that this body can come together in a time of crisis, which should give Americans some hope and some solace. Let me be very clear. Our work is far from over.

The Republican leader has called the Senate back into session despite the fact that the District of Columbia appears to be reaching the peak phase of this public health emergency, despite the risks we face by gathering here in the Capitol, despite the risks faced by security guards, cafeteria workers, janitors, and the staff who operate the floor of the Senate. I want to take a moment to thank each and every one of them—and all of those Capitol Hill workers—for being here today, for doing their jobs so that we may do ours.

If we are going to be here, if we are going to make these fine people come into work in these conditions, let the Senate at least conduct the Nation's business and focus like a laser on COVID-19. At the moment, the Republican leader has scheduled no significant COVID-related business for the floor of the Senate. Tonight, we will vote on a nomination to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Later this week, the Republican majority on the Judiciary Committee will hold a hearing for a manifestly unqualified, totally divisive, rightwing judicial nominee.

When the topic of COVID-related legislation has come up, Leader McCONNELL has simply drawn partisan lines in the sand. First, he has suggested that States and localities should go bankrupt—let them go bankrupt. He has since realized his mistake and walked that back. But then, only a few days later, the leader vowed to block any bill that does not include legal immunity for big corporations that operate unsafely and put workers in harm's way.

The Republican leader said that his redline in a future relief package is not a national testing program; it is not more help for small businesses or housing assistance for families; it is not rescuing our healthcare system. Leader McCONNELL will not support new legislation to fight this evil disease unless